

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 28, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write today to oppose your proposal to eliminate funding for the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in your FY18 budget request. We respectfully urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to support the Commission and the essential services it provides to the citizens of Appalachia.

Established in 1965 as part of President Lyndon Johnson's Appalachian Regional Development Act (ARDA), ARC is a federal-state partnership that invests in projects to foster innovation and promote economic development in 13 states across Appalachia, encompassing more than 25 million Americans spread across 420 counties. To spark economic growth, the Commission supports wide-ranging and diverse initiatives, including developing highway systems; supporting education, job-training, and health care programs; constructing and maintaining water and sewer systems, expanding broadband access in rural areas; and fostering entrepreneurial and capital market development in the region.

Since its formation the Commission has been an invaluable economic driver and job creator for the Appalachian Region. ARC has invested in 25,000 projects in Appalachia since 1965, totaling \$3.8 billion. These investments are responsible for creating nearly 312,000 jobs and generating \$10 billion in added earnings for the region. In addition, investments made by the Commission have been matched by \$9 billion from other federal, state, and local funding sources, and every dollar invested by the Commission has leveraged an average of \$6.40 from the private sector. On average, ARC funds support an estimated 6,364 jobs and produce \$204 million in earnings annually. From October 2015 to January 2017 the Commission supported 662 projects in the region totaling over \$170 million. These investments are projected to create or retain more than 23,670 jobs and train and educate over 49,000 students and workers.

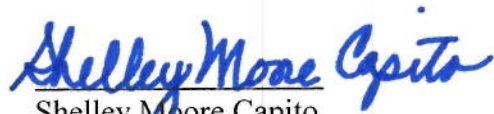
While ARC has played a prominent role in improving the quality of life in Appalachia, the work of the Commission is not complete. Despite the economic progress made in the region, many communities in Appalachia face unemployment rates higher than the national average and lack the high-quality jobs needed to attract and retain workers. The citizens of Appalachia are also susceptible to poorer health outcomes than individuals located outside the region. Additionally, while the Commission has been successful in expanding broadband service to many parts of Appalachia, there are still communities that lack access to affordable high-speed Internet service. Discontinuing programs such as ARC would undermine the progress we have witnessed in Appalachia over the last few decades and have a detrimental impact on our constituents in the region. We urge you to reconsider your decision to eliminate this essential program and encourage you instead to consider ways in which the Commission could be expanded to ensure continued progress in Appalachia.

For 52 years the Appalachian Regional Commission has played an instrumental role in reducing poverty rates, providing economic opportunities, and extending basic necessities to communities throughout Appalachia. Eliminating this essential program would have devastating consequences for the more than 25 million Americans that live in the Appalachian Region today, who need it now more than ever. As President, we hope you recognize the tremendously positive effects the Commission has had on the people of Appalachia and continue to provide support for the agency so that it may carry on its mission of empowering rural America. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

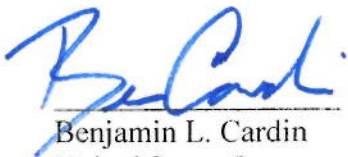
Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



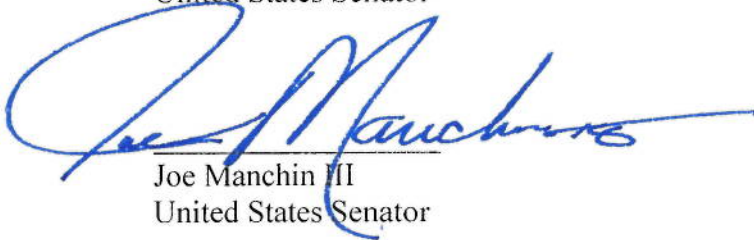
Sherrod C. Brown
United States Senator



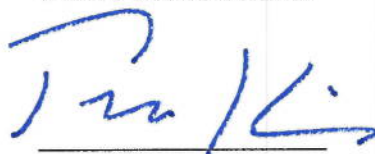
Robert P. Casey Jr.
United States Senator



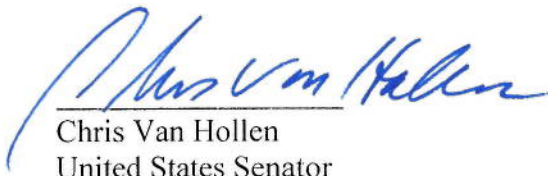
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Rob Portman
United States Senator

cc: Mick Mulvaney, Director, Office of Management and Budget